



Albania - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 9 and 12 November 2012

Information on treatment of homosexuals including legal status and societal attitudes

In March 2012 *Amnesty International* points out that:

“In February 2010 Albania adopted anti-discrimination legislation which includes the prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity” (Amnesty International (28 March 2012) *Albania: All members of parliament should support the Pride flag parade*).

A document released by *Agence France Presse* in March 2012 notes:

“Albanian gay organisations on Friday announced plans to hold the country's first ever gay pride parade in Tirana on May 17, a move immediately slammed by a government minister...But Albania's deputy defense minister...Ekrem Spahiu, was quick to slam the plan. ‘My only commentary on this gay parade is that they should be beaten with truncheons,’ he said. Albania's traditional patriarchal society is deeply homophobic, and human rights organisations say gays face violence and discrimination” (Agence France Presse (23 March 2012) *Albanian gays to stage first gay pride march*).

An article published by *Reuters* in May 2012 notes:

“A dozen gay and lesbian activists cycled through Albania's capital on Monday, holding a daring gay rights demonstration in a country which aspires to join the European Union but where conservative values are still deeply entrenched. Activists shelved plans for a larger, gay pride parade to coincide with International Day Against Homophobia on Thursday after a deputy defense minister said they should be beaten with thick sticks. Accompanied by police, the cyclists had barely begun their rain-soaked protest when hooded youths threw homemade tube bombs at them. The missiles banged and sent thick smoke into the air, but the demonstrators were unhurt and cycled on” (Reuters (14 May 2012) *Albania gay activists cycle to call for rights*).

A publication issued in May 2012 reviewing events of the preceding year by the *United States Department of State* notes:

“The law prohibited discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals; however, no official claims of discrimination were made, and the government has not had an opportunity to enforce the law” (United States Department of State (24 May 2012) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011, Albania*, Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons/Societal Abuses, Discrimination, and Acts of Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity).

This document also notes:

“Despite the law and Albania’s formal support for LGBT rights, homophobic attitudes remained...LGBT NGOs reported some discrimination and loss of employment due to sexual orientation. Reports of police harassment of LGBT persons and police brutality against transgender sex workers were verified” (United States Department of State (24 May 2012) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011, Albania*, Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons/Societal Abuses, Discrimination, and Acts of Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity).

A report issued in May 2012 by the *International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association* reviewing events of 2011 states:

“There were various cases of homophobic and transphobic violence reported throughout the year” (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (May 2012) *Annual report on the human rights situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people in Europe*, p.31).

This document also points out that:

“Throughout the year, there were reported cases of police violence against LGBT people either on the streets or at police stations, as well as refusals by the police to record crimes committed against LGBT people when they tried to report them” (ibid, p.32).

Balkan Insight in July 2012 states:

“While Albania's parliament decriminalised homosexuality in 1995, more than a decade and half later gays and lesbians are still heavily stigmatised. Most gays and lesbians still conceal their true sexual orientation, fearing that if it was discovered, their safety would be compromised. Human rights reports on Albania say ingrained attitudes among the general public leave gays and lesbians stuck on the fringes of society” (Balkan Insight (2 July 2012) *Albania All Set For First Gay Pride in 2013*).

A publication in March 2012 by *Human Rights Watch* notes:

“The Albanian government has recently taken positive steps to promote tolerance and eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity” (Human Rights Watch (26 March 2012) *Albania: Reprimand Official for Anti-Gay Remarks*).

References

Agence France Presse (23 March 2012) *Albanian gays to stage first gay pride march*

http://www.ilga-europe.org/home/guide/country_by_country/albania/albanian_gays_to_stage_first_gay_pride_march

(Accessed 12 November 2012)

Amnesty International (28 March 2012) *Albania: All members of parliament should support the Pride flag parade*
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR11/004/2012/en/9cd6e3c6-8936-40dd-a436-2dfd9f06ad9f/eur110042012en.pdf>
(Accessed 9 November 2012)

Balkan Insight (2 July 2012) *Albania All Set For First Gay Pride in 2013*
<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/albania-gay-rights-activists-plan-pride-event-in-2013>
(Accessed 9 November 2012)

Human Rights Watch (26 March 2012) *Albania: Reprimand Official for Anti-Gay Remarks*
<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/26/albania-reprimand-official-anti-gay-remarks>
(Accessed 9 November 2012)

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (May 2012) *Annual report on the human rights situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people in Europe*
http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/90_1341384347_2012-05-ilga-europe-annual-review-2011-all.pdf
(Accessed 9 November 2012)

Reuters (14 May 2012) *Albania gay activists cycle to call for rights*
http://www.ilga-europe.org/home/guide/country_by_country/albania/albania_gay_activists_cycle_to_call_for_rights
(Accessed 12 November 2012)

United States Department of State (24 May 2012) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011, Albania*
<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>
(Accessed 9 November 2012)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

Amnesty International
BBC News
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
Google
Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
International Crisis Group
IRIN News
Lexis Nexis
Minority Rights Group International
Online Newspapers
Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
Refugees International
Reliefweb
Reuters
United Kingdom Home Office
United States Department of State
UNHCR Refworld